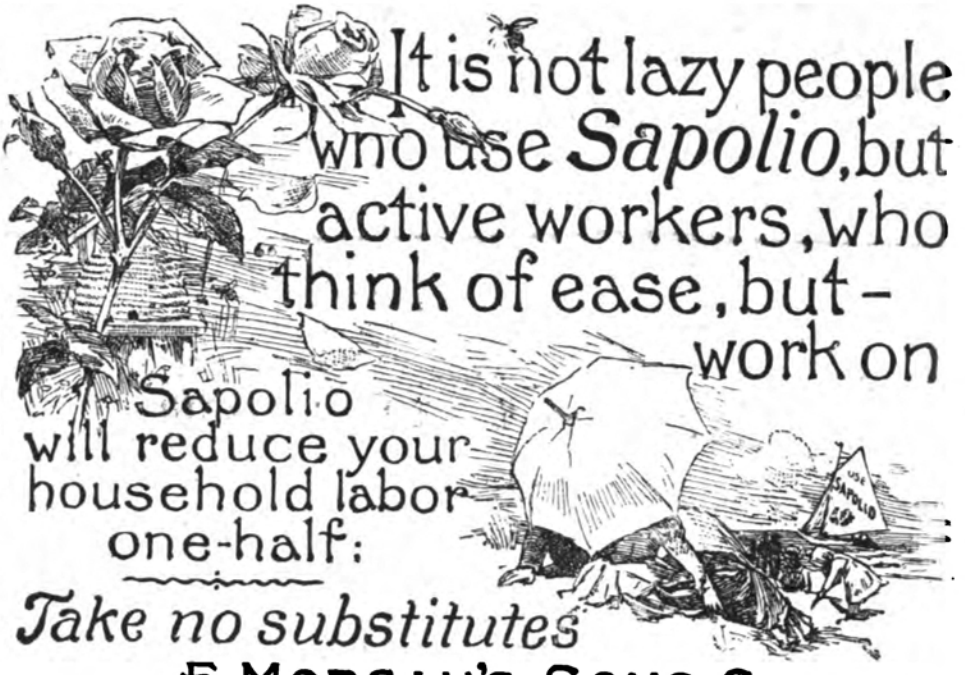
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MOTHER AND CHILD.

Engraved by Frank French from the painting by Mary Cassatt.

HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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A VISIT TO ATHENS.

BY THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM CROSWELL DOANE, D.D.



WHETHER there does or does not live

"a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land,"

is a question which has never, I believe, been answered. But I think I may say without fear of contradiction that no man (or woman either) has ever lived, whose soul has been quickened by the study of Grecian history, who has not said to himself that if possible he would see Athens. What Jerusalem is to the Christian and Mecca to the Mussulman, that Athens is to the student of the story of Greece—a shrine for pilgrim thoughts and pilgrim feet, longed for, and to be attained if possible.

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It was possible for me to attain this dream of forty years through the kindness of a gracious friend. I went as Horace in the old days went with Mæcenas—but without his painful experience—to Brindisi. That was the end of his journey, the old Brundisium, the other end from Rome of the great Appian Way, marked now by a tall pillar with a richly carved capital, which looks solemn and solitary, as mourning for the departed glories of its ancient use. It was the starting-place of our journey, about which I want to put on record, as matter of advice to other people, that our one mistake was in going to Constantinople *after* Athens. It is a bit of wisdom, borrowed from the instinct of childhood, to keep the best for the last, and, except Jerusalem, there is nothing, I think, beyond Athens in the world.

We left Brindisi about 2 A.M. on Monday, April 17th, in an Austrian-Lloyd boat, and when we awoke at eight we were in sight of the Turkish shore and the snow-crowned Albanian mountains, on a smooth, blue, beautiful sea, with the Othonian Islands in view—among them the island of Diaplo, supposed to be the island of Calypso; and the little island of Pontikonisi (the mouse island), looking faintly like a ship under full sail, and said to be the ship that brought Ulysses to Ithaca, turned by the angry Neptune into stone. So we were at once on old classic ground, or rather on classic sea. We had two hours on the island of Corfu, and got a glimpse of its old Venetian gate, its two ruined fortresses, which England dismantled when she ceded it to Greece; of its quaint and narrow streets, of its composite population, with their bright colored dresses; while over the blue sea we looked at all Albania, with its snow-capped ranges making a fair background to a fairer picture. And

when we came on board we found our ship turned into a sort of Noah's ark, with "all manner" of people, chiefly Dalmatians, in very picturesque clothes, dirty, but attractive in shape and color. The strange crooning songs sung by one boy in a high, shrill, prolonged note, with a sort of accompaniment by men's voices in harmony, was most entertaining; as were the dances of the men, in small circles, and each with an arm around his neighbor. It was a long, delicious, dreamy afternoon, everything steeped in a glow and glory of color, sea and islands and sky growing richer with the sunset hues. We were sailing over seas famous in the old historic naval battles of the world; near Actium, where Augustus won his victory over Marc Antony; near the rock of Sappho's leap; Cephalonia and Ithaca in sight, as we came near the end of our course in this lovely Ionian sea.



TEMPLE OF THESEUS.

The beauty of the journey by railway along the Gulf of Corinth can neither be painted nor penned. Every conceivable tint of color, primary or composite, prismatic or peacock-breasted, was on sea and mountains, melting and mingling with a new effect each instant, till we had exhausted adjectives and interjections, and sat in silent wonder, drinking it all in. I was rather glad that it was *new* Corinth, and not the *old* city, so full of classical and Scriptural associations, at which the train stopped for our railway luncheon. The old city, ruined by an earthquake and never rebuilt, is three miles and a half away, and we saw nothing of it except the towering top of the rock of Acro-Corinth, on which the citadel stood. But we steamed on and on, through Megara and Eleusis, until at 4.30 P.M. on Tuesday, April 18th, we caught our first glimpse of the Acropolis, straining our eyes through the windows of the carriage. And it is not too much to say that from that hour on, go where we would and see what we might, *that* single point held all our eyes, which turned to it by night and day, drawn by the magnetism of its combined interest and beauty. And *still*, among and above all mountains, all views, all beautiful things, eye and heart, memory and imagination, turn towards that single spot, which crowns not Athens alone, but all that I have seen of the whole world. Look at it or look from it, beneath you or around, it is a hill of revelation. Hymettus and Pentelicus, Salamis and the Bay of Eleusis, Acro-Corinth and the mountains of Megara, the Saronic Gulf, Argolis, Sunium — these are the farther views. Close at hand is the hill of Areopagus, unmarked, except by its undying memories, and by the still ringing echoes of the great voice which turned the minds of the very reverent Athenians from altars of innumerable deities, nameless or named, to the knowledge of the one God. At your feet are the Temple of Theseus, the sixteen columns of the great old Temple of Jupiter, the Tower of the Winds, the Monument of Philopapus, the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, the Diony-



THE PARTHENON FROM THE NORTHEAST.

sian Theatre, and the Odeion of Herodes Atticus. And just at hand are the Parthenon, wonder of wonders, the Erechtheum, the Portico of the Caryatides, the Propylæa, the Temple of the Wingless Victory. This first general view of it all was a prelude to the closer study in details. And it was a supreme moment of our lives. We turned from it, as the rosy color of its sunlit stones faded from their borrowed pink to gray, to dream, to try to assort its wonders under separate heads; to see a very kaleidoscope of mixed and varying associations; and then, with reverent feet, we climbed the other hill, and stood upon the sacred ground of Areopagus, where Paul stood, arraigned and tried before the high criminal court of Athens, whose words and life, there and throughout the world since then, have tried not only but condemned as empty and unreal (shall we not rather say as unsubstantial shadows of a truth reached after but not attained?) the religions and philosophies, the schools and altars, of the heathen world. We looked at the ruined Temple of Minerva, the bold rough hill-side, and a long dark chasm at its foot. When he was there the Parthenon was in its glory, above him and at his feet the awful shrine of the furies, while all about were the innumerable temples and altars which made true his description of the city that it was *κατ-είδωλος*.

There is something in the sky and atmosphere of Greece indefinite and indescribable, which lends itself to increase and intensify everything at which one looks. It did not strike me as being as brilliant as either Italy or America. *Pace* Byron, it seemed to me, in a way "obscurely bright." If French could ever be really rendered into English, I should translate here what Cherbuliez says of it in his *Cheval de Phidias*, which really catches and conveys the peculiar opalescence of its tone.

Any story of Athens must begin and end with the Parthenon. I supposed I knew what it looked like, and, in a gen-

eral way, in shape and style of architecture, I did. But after all pictures and all descriptions it is a revelation. Where shall I begin? The ascent is through the so-called Beule Gate, discovered by a French *savant* of that name—modern, that is to say, not more than seventeen hundred years old—and then up many steps to the Propylæa (built under Mnesicles, B.C. 437), a great central gateway, with two wings, with Doric colonnades in front and behind, superb in their severe simplicity, and towering like trees into the sky. They are all of Pentelic marble, the steps being of darker stone, from Eleusis. They were built four centuries before Christ, and stand among their own ruins, for their capitals are all about them on the ground. It was through this central door that the great Panathenaic jubilee processions always passed. On one side is the large square column of Agrippa, which once held a statue of Marcus Agrippa; and on our right is the lovely little temple of the Wingless Victory, to which you come near enough to see the beauty of its old frieze, part of which we saw afterwards among the Elgin marbles in the British Museum. The columns are imposing and very graceful, and, however much one may have read and known in a general way, it was a revelation to me of the fact that the Acropolis was the site of more temples than one, and dedicated to the worship of other deities besides Minerva—of Minerva under various attributes (this being really Minerva Victrix)—and to the glorifying of demigods and heroes besides. One lingers here for the lovely view, and for the exquisite delicacy of the building and the carvings, and then one climbs on to what seems almost a battle-field, where Time and Art have waged their war. At first it seems as if Time had had too many allies for Art to win the victory. Greek carelessness, Turkish occupation, the chance bomb of a German soldier when the Parthenon was used as a powder-magazine, and then Lord Elgin—all these have battled against the Phidian art, and yet no one can doubt that Art has conquered. Strewn as with the prostrate bodies of heroes, the whole top of the hill is full of the prone columns, the statueless pedestals, the stones to which the pedestals were fastened; and you get impressions



THE AREOPAGUS.

in this way that could hardly have been given in any other. One of the great Doric columns lying along the earth, at its full huge length, with its twelve pieces just separated enough to tell where they were joined, shows, as a fallen tree does, its enormous size. And you study the graceful taper, the delicate flutings, the grace of the oval-shaped cutting of the capitals, and then look up at its fellows still standing, and see how marvellously full of grace and beauty they are. Lying there on the ground, one of the heavy stone beams which span the roof, or one of the squares of the ceiling, with its egg-shaped moulding, is near enough to the eye to be seen in detail.

There are on the left of the Parthenon the ruins of the Erechtheum, the temple which contained the shrine of Athene Polias, an Ionic building, of which little is left, but whose beautiful portico of the Caryatides is among the most perfect things on this hill of wonders. One of the six figures is in the British Museum, looking lonely and out of place there. A plaster figure has been put in its stead, but the six maidens, as they stand there with chaste draperies, are choice and rare treasures of art. This is the most famous mythological bit of the hill, for it was here that Neptune and Minerva contended for the possession of the city, Minerva winning, because she called up an olive-tree, with all it meant of peace and joy, while Neptune's trident only struck from the earth a salt spring. This contest was evidently the subject of the sculptures on the western pediment, the eastern probably having the group of the birth of Minerva from the head of Jupiter. It is worth while to recall the historic meaning and natural explanation of these old mythologies: how Neptune's gift of horses, for instance, really meant that horses were imported into Greece from over the sea; and how to-day that "very reverent" spirit of the Athenians is shown in the fact that a mineral spring still flows from the earth among the ruins of the Temple of Æsculapius (the God of Medicine), on the side of the Acropolis. So the Acropolis is full of varied and manifold tokens, of temples, statues, and, towering over all, the Parthenon.



OLD TOMB, STREET OF THE DEAD.

We saw it in all lights, at all hours of the day, from everywhere in Athens, close and from a distance. And I see it almost as distinctly to-day. It is very easy to write down that it is a great ruined Doric temple, with ninety-eight columns, of which forty-six still stand;

that it had in it and about it fifty life-size statues, besides the colossal chryselephantine figure of Athena, which was thirty-nine feet high; and that pediment and cornice and frieze were all teeming with figures in beautiful relief, and brilliant with deep blue and red colors. What it was—what it is—no measurements and



TEMPLE OF VICTORY.

no mere architectural description can convey. The remaining figures, even in their ruins, are full of movement and of life. The flutings of the great pillars, tapering slightly towards the capitals and converging as they rise, show the most perfect and chaste delicacy of style, while the power to handle such enormous weights of stone shows how engineering skill in those old days was at high-water mark. But the impression of the Parthenon is not of its details, not of its size, not of its shape. It is immaterial. It is almost like a growth, a separate creation. It is part of the old citadel hill. It is still more part of the fadeless glories of the Greece of the heroes, the poets, the orators, the athletes of the world. And it is almost still more part of the sky, the atmosphere, which wraps it and enfolds it, and glorifies it, and softens it, and heals its wounds, and hides its breakings, and transfigures it into itself.

As a building, it was partly temple and partly treasure-house from the first. It has been Christian church* and Turkish mosque and powder-magazine. It has been robbed by heathen, barbarian, Turk, Christian. It belongs to no special coun-

* As Christian church it was dedicated in honor of the Ever-virgin Mary, as before to the *virgin* goddess Minerva.



INTERIOR OF THE ACROPOLIS, SHOWING ERECHTHEUM, CARYATIDES, AND THE NORTH SIDE OF THE PARTHENON.

try or century. The tracks of spoilers and the traces of decay have left an impress on it, but somehow its intense essential beauty has beautified their work far more than they have disfigured it. And, if one may say so reverently, the building stands, after all its despoilings, as a sort of marble *ever-virginity*, attracting, holding, and deserving the admiration of the world. You go into the museum of the Acropolis, or into the British Museum, and see the bits of carvings, the reliefs, the friezes, the statues; and somehow you come back to the empty pediments and the deflowered capitals with a sense that no wreck, nor theft, nor time, can diminish the dignity or lessen the beauty of the building as it stands to-day. I must confess to a feeling that the taking of the Parthenon marbles to England by Lord Elgin, wholesale and rather underhand plundering as it was, is, on the whole, a mercy. The Greece of to-day would have guarded and kept them. But then there was little reverence or concern in Greece for the glory of its monuments, and neither means nor knowledge nor care to preserve them. And, either by neglect or by efforts at removal, such as the Venetians made in the seventeenth century, the probability is that what is safe now in the British Museum would have been lost if it had been left in Greece. With the present better condition of things in the kingdom, and after the precedent of the surrender of Corfu, perhaps England may cede these marbles to Athens. But even so they must go into a museum. It would be almost desecration, and I am sure it would be injury, to attempt to replace them or to touch the sublime glory of the Parthenon as it stands to-day.

And now it is time for me to confess, what I don't more than half like to acknowledge, that there is something in Athens besides the Acropolis.

We went with the clear consciousness that we could have only five full days in Athens, and a good many people thought it insufficient almost to absurdity. But I have never had much time for anything, and so I have trained myself in reading and travelling, and looking to get all I could in a little time. Jebb and Sandys, Percy Gardner and Mahaffy, and Baedeker (which I confess to liking better than Murray), had been carefully studied on the journey, and I had a very clear idea of what could be done, and a still clearer idea of what could not be done. Therefore we gave up at the start Olympia and



OLD TOMB.

Marathon and Argos and Sunium, and all that would have been full of interest and attraction, and made up our minds to take Athens only, the eye and heart of Greece. But what an eye and what a heart of what a country! So I laid out my plan of sight-seeing. We had every conceivable advantage — a carriage all the time: an admirable guide, with a splendid Greek name, C. Papadopoulos; besides much pleasant help from Dr. Manatt, our consul in Athens, and his secretary, whose name was also very purely Greek—Alcibiades Psiaki. Then we had weather which made available every instant of our time—clear, cool, perfect—and with energy and spirit to take advantage of every instant. The Greek was very fascinating to me on every hand. It was splendid to be in the Hôtel d'Angleterre, in the Place of the Constitution, and to know it as the Zenodochia tēs Anglias, in the Plateia ton Suntagonatos, to find the streets called hodoi, tōn Asomatōn (Ghost Street), ton Burōnos, of Byron, of Hermes, of Kolonos, of Nicodemus, of Constantine, of Euripides. And it was great fun to be called kyrie, to say kale-mera for good-morning, to ask for and get meli hymettou (honey of Hymettus), or porto kali (oranges). Funniest of all to find the adaptation of modern words into modern Greek: beefsteak spelled mphiphteki, which is bifteki; and poudringa (pudding), and Rok-for (cheese)! And I was really comforted to find that the Greek name of the Protestant Church is Ekklesia tōn Diamarturomēnon (the Church of the Witnesses).

We saw the two famous rivers, the Cephissus, which is a little stream, and the Ilissus, a mere dry brook. We drove through the old Bazar, a narrow, crowded street, lined with open shops, where almost everything may be bought. We went into the prison of Socrates, to Kolonos, with its memories of Sophocles, and the Academia, where Plato taught; to the museum of the Acropolis, where very fine bits of the old sculptures are collected, some lovely reliefs from the Parthenon and the Nike Temple, torsos and statues, broken and unbroken—very much as if, around the still noble and erect trunk of a tree stripped by a storm, men had carefully gathered and put about its roots the broken boughs and scattered leaves; to the National Museum, where Mr. Cappadios, the director, took us, in per-

son, to see some yet unopened rooms. The relics of the Mycenæ tombs are there, exquisite gold ornaments, cups and rings and necklaces and bracelets, and, most touching of all, the token of a mother's



TEMPLE OF JUPITER.

love—the same in all ages—the gold plates still bearing the impression of the little form of a baby which had been wrapped for burial, the swaddling-bands of its birth into the new life. It is a fine new collection of rare old things—Archaic, Pelasgic, Greek, Roman, and Byzantine. Some beautiful Tanagra figurines are here. There are two theories about these: One, that these little terra-cotta statues were buried with little children as their dolls. But the other, which seems the true theory, is that in the old days they used to kill slaves and captives, and bury their bodies with their dead masters or conquerors, upon the theory that they would be companions to them in their journey to the land of shades. And at the same time they put food of all sorts into their tombs. But the later and less cruel custom substituted, still for companionship and sustenance, earthen images of men and women, and earthen imitations of fruit and food. Some of these terra-cotta vegetables and loaves and fruits we saw afterwards in Mr.

Knowles's house in London. Perhaps the most curious thing in this museum is a really well-carved figure of a washer-woman, kneeling, as you see them kneel to-day, beside the little rivers, bent over and washing clothes. It is of wood, roughly but ingeniously carved, and dates from three thousand years before Christ.

We went to the stoai (porches) of Hadrian and Attalus, and of the Giants. These are parts of colonnades which were the entranceways into a gymnasium or into a market-place, splendid in their ruins, monolithic columns some of them. In the stoa of the Giants the three male figures still stand, clear and strong, and equal to the burden they no longer bear. Among the smaller buildings the most beautiful is the Temple of Theseus. It is the most unbroken temple in all Greece, with its beautiful Doric columns; and the reliefs in the metopes are still quite traceable, with the story of the labors of Hercules on one part, and of Theseus on the two sides. It looks little in height and size beside the Parthenon and the remaining columns of the Temple of Jupiter. But it is so perfect and so well preserved as to be full of interest and beauty. Two other smaller buildings, too, are full of interest: The Tower of the Winds, built in the last century before Christ, to hold a water-clock and a sun-dial. The cistern and conduits for the water still remain; and the reliefs on the outside, quite clear still, represent the various winds, with the inscriptions remaining. And a very fascinating monument is the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates. It is a circular building, with six Corinthian columns, and a convex roof of one slab of marble, growing into a flower of the acanthus, and was built to hold the tripod which Lysicrates won in the Dionysian Games. A row of similar monuments once ran over from the Theatre of Dionysus to the centre of the town. The inscription on this fixes the date as 335 B.C., and the frieze is an amusing series of representations of the punishment of the Tyrrhenian pirates by Dionysus, who converted them into dolphins, in which shape they leaped into the sea.



PRISON OF SOCRATES.

The excavations still going on in Athens promise new wonders for those who are to come there hereafter. But those we saw are wonderful enough. Think of going to the old Stadium which Lycurgus laid out, three hundred years before Christ, for the Panathenæan Games, and finding traces still of the old walls, the course, the goal, and the seats of the spectators! The two theatres, the Odeion and the Theatre of Dionysus, are most impressive. The Odeion was roofed, and had seats for five thousand people, arranged in semicircular tiers. The older and larger Theatre of Dionysus was open to the sky, with seats for thirty thousand people. The whole arrangement is perfectly traceable to-day—the stage, the tiers, the seats themselves. The first row was for the priests, and we read the inscriptions which marked them—the Priest of Bacchus, of Jupiter, of Mars, of Ceres, of Vulcan. Behind them, in the centre, is the throne for the Emperor, and the seats inscribed for

the Archon, the King of Pergamus: the Strategos Diogenes. They are beautifully carved, of classic shape, and very comfortable, as we can testify, who sat in



TOWER OF THE WINDS, GREEK PRIEST AND SHEPHERD IN THE FOREGROUND.

them, and went back in wondering thought to the days when Æschylus and Sophocles and Euripides and Aristophanes brought out before the admiring crowds of Athenians—lovers of new things in art as in religion—their immortal plays.

The most splendid reminiscence of a ruin in Athens is in the sixteen columns of the old Temple of Jupiter, the Olympeion, which was the second largest Greek temple known to have existed. They stand there in their stately dignity, beautiful Corinthian columns, thirteen together in one group, and three by themselves, one of which lies prostrate on the ground. For forty years it has lain on the earth, unbroken except in the separation of its component pieces. And as its fellows outline themselves, still strong and erect, against the sky, they seem not only memorials of the grandeur of which they made a part, and speaking witnesses of



CARYATIDES.

the past glory of a past religion, but faithful guardians and watchers over their fallen companion. The column was blown down in 1852, in a great storm; but the reason why *it* fell, and the rest still stand, was found to be that an ant, taking advantage of a small opening in the cement between the pedestal and the base, had worked its way in, and with the branching corridors of its nest had gradually broken away the mortar which held it. So that it was weakened at the foundation, and unable to resist the violence of the storm. What ages had failed to do, what the enormous power of a furious element could not accomplish alone, was wrought to its bitter end by the least of all powers in the world, the burrowing and building of a little ant.

We walked through the street of the tombs. Among the mass of ruins we found the traces of the old double gateway, the dipylon, the principal entrance to old Athens, through which also went the road to Eleusis, the home of Æschylus, and the shrine of the highest and holiest of all heathen worship. There are many impressive monuments which hold the eye—the Monument of Dexilios, which through these twenty-two hundred years still shows the figure of the warrior on horseback striking down his enemies in the Corinthian war; two really nobly carved animals of heroic size, a hound and a bull. There is the grave of the wife of the younger Alcibiades, and so on. But the old wonder and beauty live longer, with their depth of feeling, in the smaller reliefs upon the tombs, where the one thought of infinite pathos and infinite patience stands clear in every feature of each face and in every attitude of every figure—the thought of the farewell, with little dream of the inner meaning of the word which is constantly everywhere in them, the *chaire*, which means "hail" and "farewell," with its element of hope: just love breaking the heart with hopelessness, and love nerving the heart with courage: a dream, a suggestion, a shadow of the illuminated patience, the transfigured sorrow, of the Christian farewell. The clasped hands, the giving of the treasure-box to a faithful servant, the gift of a bird by a dying mother to her little child to distract his grief—it is all so true to nature, the same the world over, in all ages; all so tender with the mystery of death, all so full of human feeling, that we turned from it with a sense that we were one with the very people to whom the ruins and remains of Athens, as we see them in their decay, had been brilliant and glorious in the days of their first splendor.



RELIEF ON FRONT OF STAGE, THEATRE OF DIONYSUS.